

## Message Text

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ORIGIN AF-06

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA

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E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS: BPRO, US, CD

SUBJECT:PROPOSAL FOR AIR CARGO SERVICE IN CHAD

REF: STATE 252540

SUMMARY: DESKOFF MET NOV. 5 WITH MESSRS. THOMAS ROBERTSON AND JOSEPH BYRNE WHO CLAIM TO REPRESENT GROUP OF AMERICAN INVESTORS PLANNING TO SET UP AIR CARGO SERVICE IN CHAD. GROUP REPORTEDLY ALREADY HAS ASSEMBLED DOLS 7 MILLION FINANCING NECESSARY TO PUT PLAN INTO PRACTICE. ROBERTSON PLANNING TO TRAVEL TO CHAD SHORTLY TO SIGN AGREEMENT WITH GOC. END SUMMARY.

1. MESSRS. THOMAS ROBERTSON AND JOSEPH BYRNE (BOTH USAF, RET.) CAME TO DEPT NOV. 5 TO EXPLAIN THEIR PLANS TO SET UP AIR CARGO FLEET BASED IN CHAD. THEY SAID THEY ALREADY HAVE HAD PRELIMINARY DISCUSSIONS WITH GOC HERE AND IN CHAD, AND GOC WAS VERY RECEPTIVE TO IDEA. BASIC PURPOSE OF FLEET WOULD BE TO EXPORT CHILLED BEEF TO COUNTRIES IN WEST AND NORTHERN AFRICA. ROBERTSON FEELS THAT SLAUGHTERHOUSES LOCATED IN SARH (CLITAM) AND NEAR N'DJAMENA PRODUCE MORE

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THAN ENOUGH BEEF TO MAKE AIR CARGO FLEET PROFITABLE OPERA-

TION. IN RETURN, FLEET WOULD IMPORT CHEMICALS AND OTHER PRODUCTS NEEDED BY SLAUGHTERHOUSES.

2. WHEN ASKED ABOUT FINANCING, ROBERTSON REPLIED THAT HE HAD LINED UP GROUP OF ABOUT 25 INVESTORS WILLING TO PUT UP DOLS 7 MILLION ON VENTURE. ROBERTSON CONFIDENT THAT OPERATION WILL BE ENTIRELY AMORTIZED AFTER ONLY 30 MONTHS. ORIGINALLY, GOC COMMITTED ITSELF TO PUTTING UP LOAN GUARANTEES FOR PROJECT, BUT ROBERTSON LATER LEARNED THAT WAS NOT FEASIBLE.

3. NEW FLEET WILL WORK WITHIN FRAMEWORK OF AIR TCHAD. HOWEVER, FLEET WILL BE INDEPENDENT, AND WILL HAVE ITS OWN EQUIPMENT (PROBABLY TO CONSIST OF 4 LOCKHEED ELECTRAS) AND OWN PERSONNEL (ABOUT 225 EXPATRIATES). ROBERTSON PLANS TO CHARTER SEVERAL CARGO AIRCRAFT FOR FIRST MONTHS OF OPERATION IN ORDER GET UNDERWAY ASAP AFTER SIGNING OF AGREEMENT WITH GOC.

4. ROBERTSON ALSO WAS ABLE TO SHED SOME LIGHT ON CLITAM SITUATION: MANAGER MULL IS APPARENTLY SHORT OF CASH, AND WILL NOT RETURN TO CHAD UNTIL HE HAS EVERYTHING THAT IS NEEDED TO PUT CLITAM BACK ON ITS FEET (THIS IS CONTRARY TO OPTIMISTIC VIEW MULL GAVE DEPT REPORTED REFTEL). HOWEVER, ROBERTSON'S AIR CARGO FLEET PREPARED PAY RENTAL TO CLITAM FOR GROUND SUPPORT/HOUSING FACILITIES. ROBERTSON BELIEVES THIS RENTAL WILL BE SUFFICIENT TO PUT CLITAM BACK INTO OPERATION.

5. COMMENT: AS EX-USAF OFFICERS, ROBERTSON AND BYRNE APPEAR HAVE EXPERTISE NEEDED TO SET UP SMALL AIR CARGO OPERATION. THEY ALSO SEEM FAIRLY KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT BUSINESS ANGLE, BUT ADMITTED THAT THEY HAVE USED OUTSIDE CONSULTANTS FOR MARKET STUDY. THEY WOULD NOT DIVULGE ANY INFO ON GROUP OF INVESTORS PUTTING UP DOLS 7 MILLION, BUT IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT OTHERS ARE OLD USAF CONTACTS. END COMMENT.

6. ROBERTSON PLANNING FLY PARIS WITHIN TEN DAYS, AND CONTINUE CHAD SOON THEREAFTER IN ORDER SIGN FINAL AGREEMENT WITH GOC. HE WILL CHECK WITH EMBASSY UPON ARRIVAL.

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